

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

BRITISH NATION

Tuesday, October 24. 1710.

WELL, Gentlemen Citizens of London, is this what you call an Election of Members of Parliament? And if I should Address my self to you, Gentlemen, of various other parts of England — You have met, Mobb'd, Rabb'd, and thrown dirt at one another; the Horse have trampled down the Foot, the Foot have Ston'd and hurried the Horse, Mens Heads, Arms, and Legs, have been broke, some come Home bruise'd, some bloody — *Northampton, Whitechurch, Coventry, London, Westminster, Norwich, Marlton,* — And innumerable other Places, the Fighting, the Rabbles, Tumults, and Extravagancie, are not to

be enumerated — Now, pray, what do ye call this? — Shall we call this a free Choice? — No Man will, I believe, pretend to it.

Now, Gentlemen, before we enter into particulars, I would be glad some Learned Man in our Constitution, would satisfy me in some Scruples which I have, with respect to these Things, and which, till I am satisfy'd about, I must remain very Ignorant — I shall propose my doubts by way of Query.

1. If Mobbs and Violence, influence our Elections, how can it be said, we have preserv'd to us the Freedom of Elections?

Elections? How can it be a free Choice?

2. If it be not a free Choice, how can it be said to be a free Parliament?
3. What is the difference between a Parliament Chosen, or Nominated by the Mob, and *Oliver Cromwell* naming a Parliament by the Power of a standing Army?

As to the first Query here, about a free Choice, I must hint an Objection; To say a *Free Choice*, has something of Nonsense in it, the Term notes some Inconsistency in the very Words; if it be not *Free*, it is no more a *Choice*; Mob and Tumult, may send Men up to Parliament, and they may go thither, upon what Foot they please; but the Word CHOICE, should not be used in the Case, it should not be nam'd in the Day; there's no more Choice in these Things, than the *Poles* had in King *Stanislaus*, while a *Swedish Army* stood drawn up in *Batavia*, to preserve the Freedom, as they call'd it — This is like opening the Doors of a Prison, and bidding the Prisoners go away, while at the same time, every Man is Chain'd by the Leg, to the next Post — *Choice* imports *Freedom*, and if it be no more *Free*, 'tis no more a *Choosing*.

In like manner, if the Members are impos'd, not Chosen, it is no Parliament; a Parliament, as we understand it, is a Representative; how can they be said to Represent those, who really do not send them? If the Majority of the People do not send them, they are no Representative; if they are not Chosen, they are not sent; if not freely, not Chosen — What a Medley of a House must those be, who come up without the Choice of the People they pretend to Represent? a Thousand strange Inconsistencies attend the Case of a Corrupt Election, and the Objections are unanswerable.

In this, as in other Cases, I have nothing to do with Parties; I care not who you

send up, so you do but Choose them, so you do but make an Uninterrupted, Legal, and Peaceable Choice — But to send up the *Sons of Riot*, to a *British Parliament*; this is a Thing, the Consequences of which no Man can foresee; it respects us all, of what Side, or of what Party soever; *Tories* may gain by it one Day, and lose by it another; at this rate, the uppermost Party will always fly to Violence, and a fair Election will be forgotten in the Nation — Tumult and Rabble will always prevail, and all we have to do, is to gain the Mob.

Some may ask me here, what I mean by Mobbs and Violence? — That the Elections are as they us'd to be, only they do not go as I would have them, and therefore I exclaim — This is an Objection of Words without Argument. I have not yet said the Elections do not go as I would have them, nor is it at all concern'd in the Case, what I would, or would not have; if I must give an Account, who I would, or would not have Chosen, I am far from being afraid of speaking it — I shall tell you in short now, and larger hereafter; I wish to have Men of Temper, and Moderate Principles Chosen, let them be of what Party they will; If there are any fiery, bloody, furious Tempers, who put in for your Choice, let them be Whigs or Tories, I wish they may be thrown out — Our Disease requires a soft Hand, and gentle Physick to Cure it; rash doings are at all Times bad, but at this Time would be Mortal: Hot Men can never cool the Ferment, or quench the Fire kindled thus unhappily among us — If you have a Mind to blow us all up, you may Choose such, whose Temper will be Gunpowder thrown in among these Sparks, and who will not fail to overthrow every thing that comes in their Way; but whoever is for Cooling our Inflammation, for Healing this unhappy Breach, they are the Men fit for you to Choose, let them be of which Side they will, and they are the Men, all Men who are in the *Wits* will Vote for.

Now

Now to tell me you have not Chose such as these, is not to tell me you have not Chosen such as I like, but that you have not Chosen such as you like your selves — And after all, perhaps such are Chosen too, and I doubt not but they are — But what is all this to the purpose? — Is there any Side will tell us they stand in need of Tumult and Mob, to carry their Interest? It is the severest Satyr in the World upon any Gentleman's Merit, to say it will not pass upon the Country, without the help of these Violences; that they must have Mobbs to keep off the Electors from Polling, or they shall lose it — That is as much as to say, they cannot be fairly Chosen; for no Man that can carry it fairly, would choose to do it foully.

I cannot think that any wise Man of either Side, can, in his sedatest Thoughts say, he approves of the Riots and Tumults, practis'd upon your late Election in the City of London — Let him go through the Streets and View the Houses, how they look like Bandy Houses, with their Windows broke, their Shutters daub'd with Dirt, and their Balconies full of Stones — As if some Publick Enemy had taken Possession of the City. — What was the Matter? Violence, Reiga'd, Tumult Govern'd the City of London for several Hours, Rage and Madnefs fill'd the Streets, and every one was expos'd to the Discretion of the Rabble; and pray, Gentlemen, you that are less concern'd at these Things, observe; did they distinguish *Whigs* from *Tories*? Are not your Friends Windows broke, as well as your Enemies? — Was not a Church-man knock'd down in the Street, as well as a *Dissenter*? Was it not, as it is in all such Cases, that Friend and Foe shar'd the Dammage? — Let any Man View the Streets; are they all *Whigs* that dwell between *Ludgate* and *Temple-Bar*? — And where was there a House, that was not in this manner insulted?

And what's this for? All for Choosing Parliament Men! — Men to make Laws

for good Government; Laws to Protect our Property, and Preserve the Peace! Monstrous London! Is this the Way to keep your Priviledges, and Support your Constitution? Is it this Temper you would have Represented? — Would you have us believe, you could Choose your Parliament Men by no other Method but this? — Where will it end? What will you say for your selves, when Tumults may hereafter break out to a more Extravagant height? For who knows where such doings may end? What can you Obj-ct, when it shall be said, you began the Practice in your Parliament Elections?

And what was all this Rabble for? What Design? What is the Aim of it? — What may be in the Prospect I know not, but I see nothing in View, but what is merely insulting Government itself, and flying in the Face of the Publick Authority — To say they are for the Queen, is most horrid Impudence! her Majesty doubtless abhors such a Thought — Nay the very Party they pretend to espouse, is injur'd by them; nor can at all approve what they are doing; so wise Man can espouse them, no honest Men will Encourage them; Knaves only set them to Work to scare Fools, and in the end grow asham'd of them themselves.

And where will these Things end? It is impossible but they must end in one of these Things, either in Publick Resentment, or Publick Confusion; if Government does not suppress Rabble, the Rabbles must overturn Government, for they are perfectly Inconsistent together — Mobs like Rivers, the calm Screams only are made Useful and Navigable, the rapid Current serves no Body, but runs on with Fury, till 'tis buried in the Ocean — Happy the Nation that understands and knows how to improve that Great, that Useful, and so little valu'd Thing called Moderation, a Thing out of Fashion, and growing out of Use among us; but a Thing, which in all Ages has preserv'd the Esteem Wise Men have for it, and ever will do so.

A D F E R.

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